

## **MEMO TO STUDENTS: NEW CUNY POLICY REGARDING CONSENSUAL, INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CUNY FACULTY/EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS**

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### **MEMORANDUM**

To: CUNY Students

From: Frederick P. Schaffer, General Counsel and Senior Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs  
Frank D. Sanchez, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Re: New CUNY Policy Regarding Consensual, Intimate Relationships Between CUNY Faculty/Employees and Students

On November 26, 2012, the University's Board of Trustees revised its policies on equal opportunity, non-discrimination and sexual harassment. The purpose of this memo is to make students aware of a significant change contained in the University's revised policy against sexual harassment, relating to intimate relationships between CUNY employees and students. CUNY policy now prohibits faculty members and other employees from engaging in consensual intimate relationships with students for whom they have a "professional responsibility." For example, a faculty member has a professional responsibility for a student in his/her class, or for a student for whom the faculty member is serving as an academic advisor, faculty counselor, or member of a thesis committee. In the case of a non-faculty employee, having a professional responsibility for a student would include coaching a student on an athletic team, supervising a student in a part-time job, or providing the student with guidance or counseling.

CUNY has decided to forbid relationships between CUNY faculty/employees and students for whom they have a professional responsibility because of the unequal power dynamic between the CUNY faculty or staff members and the students in such cases. For example, a student may feel pressured to enter into a relationship with a professor because that professor is responsible for grading him or her in a class. CUNY also adopted the policy because of the possibility that conflicts of interest may arise when a faculty member or employee is required to evaluate the work or make personnel or academic decisions with respect to a student with whom he or she is having an intimate relationship.

A copy of the revised Policies on Equal, Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Against Sexual Harassment can be found at:

<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ohrm/policies-procedures/finalnondeiscrimpolicy121213.pdf>

In addition, students should be aware of and review CUNY's Policies and Procedures Concerning Sexual Assault, Stalking and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Against Students, which can be found at:

<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/CUNYSexualAssaultPolicy.pdf>